

EXTENDING UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, it is un-American that House Republicans are refusing to hold a vote on extending benefits for Americans who have worked and are now unemployed. It is particularly astounding, with a Speaker from Ohio, where unemployment has just ticked up, that the Republican Party refuses to bring up a vote on extending unemployment benefits.

Since 1948, this is the first time that Congress has allowed extended unemployment benefits to expire with unemployment rates as high as they are. Long-term rates, especially among older workers—people who have worked their entire lives—are at the highest levels and doggedly resistant to amelioration.

More than 1.3 million Americans, including nearly 40,000 Ohioans, have lost benefits because of House Republicans. If House Republicans get their way, by the end of this year, 5 million Americans and their families will have been denied unemployment benefits—people who have worked their entire lives.

Speaker BOEHNER, that includes more than 128,000 Ohio families being denied benefits they have rightfully earned.

My office has been receiving call after call from constituents who don't know why they lost their benefits and asking what they can do now. In one particular case, a woman put in the required years for her job and was ready to retire. She believed in work. She valued work. She spent her life doing it. Unfortunately, suddenly, just before she put her papers in to retire, she was laid off. She lost her job as a result of cutbacks, through no fault of her own. Her husband is disabled and unable to work. Extended unemployment benefits were helping the family make ends meet. Republicans in this House took away this family's ability to pay their bills. She is now begging friends and relatives to help pay their heat bill, to keep the lights turned on, and to pay their medical bills. The uncertainty and stress this family is now facing is unfair and completely un-American.

Extending unemployment benefits to people who work is not only the right thing to do, it actually is better for our economy. The Economic Policy Institute estimates if we do not extend unemployment benefits, it will cost our economy 310,000 more lost jobs because people who aren't able to hold their family budgets together anymore don't buy as many groceries, can't pay their gas bills, can't pay their mortgages, and they fall into poverty.

Why would Congress want millions more falling into poverty while creating more job loss in the Nation? Creating jobs and growing our economy should be our first priority here in Congress.

As Paul Krugman put it in a recent New York Times article:

No matter how desperate you make the unemployed, their desperation does nothing to create more jobs.

So let's come together to strengthen our economy, to stop offshoring millions and millions of jobs in this country, and let's extend unemployment benefits to the people in this country who have earned them. Until then, I urge Republicans to at least allow a vote on restoring unemployment benefits to those Americans who have worked for a living and deserve the respect of this Congress.

HONORING SPECIALIST TERRY K.D. "DANTEZ" GORDON

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. HARPER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. HARPER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a great American hero, Specialist Terry K.D. "Dantez" Gordon, who was among six U.S. soldiers who passed away due to wounds suffered when their Black Hawk UH-60 helicopter went down in Afghanistan's Zabul region on December 17, 2013.

Specialist Gordon was born in Shubuta, Mississippi, on September 21, 1991. After graduating from Quitman High School, Gordon enlisted in the Army in the summer of 2011, fulfilling his basic training requirements at Fort Jackson, South Carolina. He then went on to complete his advanced individual training at Fort Lee, Virginia, where he became a generator mechanic.

Dantez was assigned to Echo Troop, 1st Squadron, 6th Cavalry Regiment, Fort Riley, Kansas. He was later trained as a door gunner and attached to Bravo Company, 3rd Assault Helicopter Battalion, 1st Aviation Regiment. There, Specialist Gordon was tasked with firing and maintaining manually directed armament during missions, protecting the helicopters' crew members and passengers throughout the deployment to Afghanistan.

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Dantez Gordon loved helicopters. He knew very early on that he was meant for the Army because that is where he could fly in a Black Hawk.

His family said they were surprised at first that he wasn't going into the Marine Corps like his father, but it became quite apparent that his interests were centered in going up in a helicopter. His family members were nervous, yet they realized that he loved what he was doing and he was not afraid.

Dantez loved his family, his friends and his country. He was fortunate in that he loved what he was assigned to do, and he would talk about it any chance he got when he came home on leave with anyone who would listen.

Specialist Gordon is remembered by those closest to him as always being happy, especially when he was outdoors or playing baseball. He was a practical joker, and he loved to make people laugh.

His family and his community saw him as an all-around, very devoted, humble, smart, and respectable young man who lost his life way too soon. He lost his life fighting for our families and for our country, and for this, our country, and particularly, the State of Mississippi, will be forever grateful.

"Like ripples in the water," his aunt said, "Dantez Gordon affected people he may have never even met," adding that the world is a better place because he was there.

In an article that described the moment when Specialist Gordon's flag-draped coffin was taken off the plane at Key Field in Meridian, Mississippi, on his final journey home, a family member observed: "As they unloaded him off the plane, the sun peeked through the cloudy gray sky, and as they put him into the hearse, the clouds closed back up." It was as if the sky opened up to pay its final respects to its beloved native Mississippi son.

Specialist Gordon's awards and decorations include the Army Achievement Medal, the Army Good Conduct Medal, the National Defense Service Ribbon, the Afghan Campaign Medal with Campaign Star, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, the Army Service Ribbon, the Combat Action Badge and the Aviation Badge.

Specialist Gordon was posthumously awarded the Bronze Star by executive order for meritorious service from August 13, 2013, until December 17, 2013, upon which no greater honor can be demonstrated than by this ultimate sacrifice. He will always be remembered for these actions.

Dantez Gordon is survived by his parents, Terry W. Gordon of Pachuta, Mississippi, and Sabina R. Edwards of Shubuta, Mississippi; as well as his sister, Terruna Gordon; stepfather, David Edwards; and two half brothers, David Edwards and William Edwards.

I was so moved at his funeral service to see what was really a celebration of his life.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to leave you with a quote from Dantez's father: "Dantez was my hero long before joining the military, but now he's America's hero."

How true that statement is. Dantez's love for his country and his dedication to protecting our freedoms took him from Shubuta, Mississippi, to Afghanistan. Christ said in John 15:13: "Greater love hath no man than he that give his life for another."

For his courage and final sacrifice, he will never be forgotten. Thank you for this opportunity to place focus on a true American hero.

RENEW UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ) for 5 minutes.

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to